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ABSTRACT

This collection of five essays examines the ways sociology, as a discipline, currently reflects ongoing scholarship on gender, race, ethnicity, social class, and sexual orientation. In "Scholarship and the Curriculum: The Study of Gender, Race, Ethnicity, and Class," Margaret L. Anderson argues that the study of race, class, and gender has become a new field within sociology. In "Sociology and Disciplinary Transformation," Rose M. Brewer examines some of the problems in the field, maintaining that there is a growing emphasis on the sociology of gender without consideration of race and that recent changes in the field have not embraced women of color and working-class women. In "Rethinking the Disciplines: Sociology and Criminology," Natalie J. Sokoloff argues that race, gender, and class are largely ignored in the fields of sociology and criminology, while Julia Wrigley, in "Rethinking the Disciplines: Sociology," notes that feminist study of gender potentially challenges both the core theoretical perspectives of the field and its subfield organization. In "Rethinking the Disciplines: Sociology of the Family," Gloria Bonilla-Santiago maintains that feminist, race, and ethnic studies have advanced sociologists' understanding of the family's relationships to the economy and the state. Each essay contains references. (MDM)

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ED 432 962

SOCIOLOGY

CUNY Panel: Rethinking the Discipline

WOMEN in the CURRICULUM

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Women in the Curriculum

SOCIOLOGY

CUNY Panel:

Rethinking the Disciplines

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Towson University, Baltimore, MD

PREFACE

In the fall of 1992 the SEMINAR ON SCHOLARSHIP AND THE CURRICULUM: THE STUDY OF GENDER, RACE, ETHNICITY, AND CLASS, under the aegis of the **City University of New York Academy for the Humanities and the Sciences**, and generously funded by the Ford Foundation, undertook a series of meetings devoted to "Rethinking the Disciplines." The Academy Seminar had already spent four years examining ways in which the study of gender, race, ethnicity, and class has slowly been transforming the curriculum of the university. Panels had explored women's studies, ethnic studies, area studies, interdisciplinary studies, pedagogical issues, and teaching about such topics as AIDS. The Academy Seminar draws upon faculty at CUNY who are members of the CUNY Academy, and upon those interested in these specific issues and those who have themselves taken part in one of the several curriculum transformation projects within CUNY beginning in the 1980s.*

* Two at Hunter College beginning 1983 among those teaching introductory courses and in 1985 among faculty in the professional schools; two sponsored by the Center for the Study of Women and Society with Ford Foundation grants for the Community Colleges and for Integrating Materials on Women of Color into the Senior Colleges; four semester-long seminars funded by the New York State Department of Education's Vocational Education program for technical and vocational education faculty within the University; and six year-long seminars organized by the Office of Academic Affairs of the University for Balancing the Curriculum for Gender, Race, Ethnicity, and Class.

It was timely, therefore, that in its fifth year the Academy Seminar should ask directly how much the new theory and curriculum changes that have been identified over the years have actually affected the pursuit of our disciplines. The four areas targeted—Literature, History, Sociology, and Biology—represent disciplines in which a great deal of new "theory" now exists, new journals have proliferated, and considerable work has been done under many aegises to identify, explicate, and disseminate the transformed perspectives that have been formulated. There is no lack of materials now, no absence of theoretical frameworks, no question of the level of sophistication and argumentation, and no dearth of pedagogical analyses demonstrating the importance of these new methodological approaches, this new knowledge base.

For SOCIOLOGY, each panelist was asked to consider the issues from a set of questions framed to bring forward what is happening from her perspective in the discipline. These questions probe the ways sociology currently reflects the ongoing scholarship on gender, race, ethnicity, and class: Have there been any shifts in the ways research is taught to graduate students in this field, for example, or are the questions asked by the discipline in any way different? If there have been changes, have they begun to show up in introductory textbooks?

More fundamentally, do our panelists believe that there have been efforts to reconceptualize the discipline? If on the other hand, panelists think disciplinary changes have been minor, do they care to comment on why—in the light of so much new scholarship on gender, race, ethnicity, and class, changes remain marginal to the practice of the discipline?

Has our new wealth of knowledge affected our teaching? Has it accomplished any significant paradigm shifts in traditional disciplines?

Dorothy O. Helly

Series Editor

March 1, 1993

Towson University, Baltimore, MD

SOCIOLOGY

Scholarship and the Curriculum: The Study of Gender, Race, Ethnicity, and Class

Margaret L. Andersen

The questions proposed for this seminar make one think about the basic assumptions of the discipline and how sociology needs to be changed if it is to become more inclusive. I encourage you to think about these questions and develop your work from them. In my case, I have an approach-avoidance relationship with sociology because there are things about theory and research in the discipline that I cherish and much about it that needs deep transformation. The question I start with is: *Are the questions that the discipline asks the same as they were twenty years ago, considering the new scholarship on race, class, gender, and ethnicity?*

I find this time frame useful, in part because I was still in graduate school twenty years ago and it gives me a benchmark from which to measure change. Also when I look over that long period of time, I am less discouraged than I sometimes feel in the face of resistance to a more inclusive sociology. When I was in graduate school, most of the women in the graduate program were asking questions about whether or not the concepts in sociology applied to our lives as women. Luckily, the faculty members

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were very tolerant of our brashness. One of my seminars, William Julius Wilson's course—which was a basic course in race and ethnic relations then titled, "The Black Man in America,"—provides a case in point. We asked, for example, whether women were a colonized minority in the sense that Robert Blauner talked about in his now classic article, "Internal Colonialism and Ghetto Revolt." It was a stretched argument and, yet, nevertheless was indicative of the new questions that feminist sociologists were asking.

The field of race, class, and gender is now that—a *new field* in sociology. The emergence of this new field begs the question of how this field is different from the traditional study of stratification—a field that you might reasonably argue has always taken race, class, and gender as central variables or features of society to be explained at least to some extent. In fact, sociology has always taken inequality as a central theme, although curiously enough at the very same time that it has excluded the most disadvantaged groups from much of its research and theorizing. There is significant overlap between the new field of race, class, and gender and the old field of stratification. Yet, in some ways, they have very different content and methodology. I will give you a few points of comparison to begin our thinking on this question.

First, the study of stratification has primarily been the study of *class*. Stratification scholars are most concerned about the formation, operation, and consequences of the class system. When race and gender have been included in stratification studies, they have been included in quite particular ways. Race is considered frequently in the study of stratification, but generally by asking how racial stratification is related to class stratification. This keeps class as the central thing to be explained; race is often not conceptualized as an independent system of its own. Simi-

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larly, when stratification researchers have considered gender, they have focused primarily on gender stratification. This is certainly an important area where there is now a wealth of scholarship; yet, this research asks only certain questions about gender. The study of race, class, and gender, on the other hand, has a very different central question than stratification. That is, how are race, class, and gender, as Patricia Hill Collins argues, intersecting and interlocking systems of oppression that affect all social experience, not just one's placement in the social stratification system?

Within the field of stratification, attention to status attainment research actually limits the inclusion of race and gender. Status attainment research takes as a core assumption that the class system is basically open and that, with the acquisition of particular individual attributes, one can be upwardly mobile. Embedded within its theoretical and research traditions are many of the myths about the American class system that, if we begin from the study of race and gender, are called into question.

This brings me to another point about stratification and race, class, gender studies and that is the tendency within stratification, given its positivist leanings, to see race, class, and gender as separate variables for analysis, not as whole systems of oppression that affect all of social life. This is the difference in talking about, again as Patricia Hill Collins does, a matrix of domination approach versus an additive approach in which race, class, and gender are merely individual attributes, not systematic systems of subordination and domination.

Another distinction between race, class, gender studies, and traditional studies of stratification is in some ways obvious and, yet, has important ramifications. Race, class, gender studies have their origins in feminist scholar-

ship, whereas stratification has its origins in androcentric scholarship. Within race, class, gender studies, the experiences of women of color have been central to the reconceptualization of sociology and other disciplines. However, although originating from the study of women of color, race, class, and gender are seen as experiences affecting all of us, not just the people most victimized by these systems.

Finally, compared to the field of stratification, the new field of race, class, and gender is very interdisciplinary in its focus. Quite the contrary, stratification studies, particularly in recent years, have become increasingly specialized, addressed to a narrow and esoteric audience. As a result, many of the contributions made in the current empirical literature in stratification are primarily statistical and methodological, not substantive.

On a slightly different question, I also ask how these changes have appeared in textbooks. Have they? Texts are, of course, extremely important in transmitting the knowledge of the discipline to future generations. For the vast majority of the undergraduate students who take sociology courses, the textbook that they read may well be the only sociology book they ever read in their lives. So, although textbooks are typically devalued and demeaned within the discipline, I see them as an extremely important method of communicating the discipline's central insights. At the same time, I see them as one of the most resistant places to change within the discipline (except for graduate education that I discuss below).

When I look at the textbooks both at the introductory level and in particular fields, I see that there has been some transformation, but not nearly enough. In general, I would say that white women have been included far more than have women of color and men of color in recent years.

But, largely speaking, introductory books still segregate racial-ethnic groups into the single chapter on race and ethnicity—reproducing the traditional notion that race only affects minority group members and that racial-ethnic groups are not important in institutions. Much of the material about people of color is presented in texts in ways that reproduce existing social stereotypes. This is particularly evident in the common practice of including material on race only when one is talking about poverty and crime. Or, when racial-ethnic groups are included in discussions on families, the focus tends to be on broken families and their implications for poverty and crime.

There are several reasons that I think texts have been resistant to change. The first is conservatism in the discipline itself. Many faculty teach introductory sociology attempting to convey the traditional ideals of the discipline. Moreover, some are concerned that if they include too much material on race, class, and gender, they will appear too radical to students. Not only does the emphasis on tradition mitigate against the inclusion of new scholarship, but faculty fears about student conservatism often lead them to ignore or minimize the new scholarship on women and racial/ethnic groups. This is related to a second problem—the fears of white faculty in teaching about race and racism. Few faculty have had graduate seminars or education about race—even fewer than have studied gender. Rather than teaching this topic at all, they often remain silent—or keep discussion of race limited to a conceptual distinction between racism and prejudice. Unfortunately, this silence perpetuates many of the racial stereotypes that students bring with them to the classroom.

A third factor limiting the inclusion of race, class, and gender in introductory texts is the conservatism of publishers, as driven by the market. Rather than take mar-

ket risks, publishers produce texts that mirror all the previous texts, reproducing the same organization and content in new books as is found in old books. Constraints on faculty time discouraging them from massive revision of their teaching exacerbate this trend. A fourth factor influencing the resistance to integrating race, class, and gender is the sheer difficulty of the task. It is far easier to integrate data *about* women and racial/ethnic groups than to integrate new conceptual frameworks into the existing perspective of texts.

Finally, I would like to speak briefly about the implications of the new scholarship on race, class, and gender for graduate education. I believe we have been far more successful at transforming undergraduate education than we have graduate education. As I said before, very few sociologists study race; it is seldom a requirement in graduate programs, even though it is one of the major contributions that sociologists make to the study of social problems and social policy. I see the consequences of this for minority recruitment and retention into the discipline. For example, the American Sociological Association MOST Program recruits undergraduate minority students with an interest in sociology into an intensive summer institute program that is designed to give them advanced skills in sociological research and theory. In addition, the program provides professional development activities that will encourage them to attend graduate school. Most do, choosing prestigious schools, but typically discovering that the more prestigious the school, the less likely they will be able to study race, class, or gender, much less all three simultaneously. We have created a situation where students enter graduate school with a transformed consciousness and high expectations that the discipline will serve their interest in race, class, and gender studies. Their disappointment and alienation from the curriculum leads to dropout rates

among the minority sociologists—hereby reproducing the homogeneity of the faculty, as well as the research literature in the discipline.

In conclusion, I would argue that transformation of the discipline is critical to the survival of sociology as a field. The curriculum and content of the discipline is deeply tied to the composition of the student and faculty body. In addition to that, curriculum and content is tied to the interest of students in sociology and their enthusiasm for instruction in the discipline. In an era in which budget reductions threaten every department, those that do not remain intellectually vital and welcoming to diverse groups put themselves at great risk. This is critical time for sociology. The sociological perspective lies at the heart of all of the new scholarship on race, class, and gender, regardless of the discipline in which this scholarship is produced. Without transformation itself, sociology stands to lose its central place as a discipline that informs the scholarship of others and which is central to the university mission.

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Sociology and Disciplinary Transformation

Rose M. Brewer

Sociology is troublesome. Its specialties include race relations, sex and gender, and social stratification. Yet, if one examines the field, it is quite Eurocentric in epistemological assumptions, research practice, and sociological training. Issues of pedagogy, curriculum, and knowledge are at the center of my discussion on the field of sociology and curriculum transformation. My remarks are centrally related to the first of a series of questions being asked about curriculum transformation in the field of sociology. This question is: *In what ways has the discipline been affected by the scholarship of the last twenty years that has focused on gender, race, ethnicity and class?*

My answer is, marginally, if we are speaking of these realities—race, class, gender, and ethnicity—as simultaneous and interactive social forces. Theorizing in the field too often does not treat race, class, gender, and ethnicity as deeply embedded social realities. Yet, as variables, tremendous scholarly activity in the field goes on regarding these inequalities. A variable analysis simply is inadequate for theorizing race, class, and gender as central organizing principles of American society.

As central organizing principles in relation and interaction to one another, a good deal of conceptual work remains to be done regarding the sociological parameters of race, class, gender and ethnicity. This is true despite the counter-currents that are about curriculum transformation.

The countercurrents are reflected in the work of sociologists such as Margaret Andersen, Bonnie Dill, Mary Romero, Evelyn Glenn, and the growing number of feminist sociologists of color. Yet the field is not transformed. Even still, sociology is dominated by methodological individualism and atheoreticism. It is a field in crisis because the deep social issues of today cannot be addressed without understanding the profound interrelationship among race, class, gender, and ethnicity. More on this assertion.

A Field in Crisis

I contend that some of the key problematics of sociology today are:

a. Sociology in Gendered Context. There is a growing emphasis on the sociology of gender without consideration of race. The past twenty years of feminist sociology in the field has engendered a partial transformation of the discipline. The experiences of white Euramerican women are increasingly encoded in the field as universal. Women and men of color remain largely invisible or misspecified in frameworks that embody the particular experiences of white Euramerican, middle-class women and men. The persistence of an essentialized sociology of gender must be questioned.

b. Sociology in Racialist, Ethnocentric, and Euramerican Contexts. My major contention here is that the field is rooted in prescriptives of the social ethnocentric, racialist, and white European world. Every specialization from family to criminology is predicated on white middle-class normative markers of the social life. Racial and ethnic people of color still too often appear as problems or pathology. Where is there subjectivity of people of color in the field of

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sociology? How might we understand the complexity of multiethnic political, economic, and societal structures? These social realities are yet to be specified in the field.

c. The "Missing" Multicentered Representation of Social Life. This conceptual issue requires placing at the center of the field the simultaneous, relational, and embedded realities of race, class, gender, and ethnicity. Indeed, while there has been some pluralization of the field, especially regarding the sociology of white middle-class women, the intersection of race, class, and gender as powerful social forces in interrelationship, is largely absent.

I would argue that current malaise in the discipline regarding curriculum transformation is part of broader historical positioning in which sociology is situated insecurely in the academy. Sjoberg and Vaughan argue this point. They note:

> Sociology's position has been, and continues to be relatively insecure within the bureaucratic structure of the larger society (to say nothing of the global level). Sociology was a latecomer on the social science scene. The Chicago School, which dominated pre-World War II sociology, grounded its legitimacy in providing an understanding of new immigrant groups and marginal or deviant groups within the rapidly changing urban environment. Although individual sociologists were linked to the state apparatus, the discipline as a whole, except for rural sociology, had few, if any, direct ties with state and corporate structures before World War II (1993, 71).

Sjoberg and Vaughan go on to argue that the field embraces a natural science model of social research. In the various specialties they point out:

> The natural science model is highly entrenched in such well-established specialties as criminology, demography, rural sociology, the family, and social psychology (1993, 80).

Other key problematics in the field are related to the need for attaining scientific legitimacy. Thus, for the gate keepers of the discipline, those white men who control high ranking graduate programs and journals in the field, sociology is earmarked by:

- grantspersonship,
- heavy reliance on the variable approach,
- statistical and mathematical modeling,
- techniques and methodology, and
- traditional graduate training with an emphasis on ethnocentric, Eurocentric, and masculinist perspectives.

Indeed, graduate education has remained heavily defined in the traditional mode. The recent research of Mary Romero supports this assertion and notes the scarcity of faculty of color in graduate degree granting programs. She finds in a survey of ninety-two sociology departments:

> . . . 29 percent of the departments had only one African-American faculty; 29 percent had one Asian-American faculty, and 17 percent had only one Mexican American. Race and ethnicity were not central to course offerings in the discipline. Only one fifth (20 percent) of all faculty in graduate programs were listed as conducting research or teaching in the area. Less than a quarter (23 percent) of the departments had race

in the required theory courses. Twenty-six departments did not offer a single graduate course on race, even though six of these departments claimed to offer a specialty in the area (unpublished paper presented at Meetings of the Society for the Study of Social Problems, Pittsburgh, August 1992).

Counter-Tendencies

Sociology has been challenged from within and without historically. Since the 1960s there have been several major efforts to redefine the field. New Left perspectives reintroduced an open critique of capitalism into the field by the late 1960s and 1970s. This coincided with the struggle to generate a black sociology relevant to the experiences of African Americans (Ladner 1973). A feminist sociology followed in the wake of the New Left and black sociology critiques. And most recently, a black feminist sociology predicated on explicating the intersection of race, class, and gender is emerging (Collins 1986, 1990).

Although some efforts to reconceptualize the field are going on, too many of the questions are the same and the enterprise is fraught with difficulty and contradictions. As a case in point, let me say something more about the critique embodied in white feminist sociology and the "critique of the critique" expressed in black feminist sociology.

White Middle-Class Feminism and the Sociology of Gender

There is a liberal feminist gender problematic in sociology that is troublesome. Williams and Sjoberg (1993) point to a dominant wing in feminist sociology that is sen-

sitive neither to race nor class. They cite the work of Smith and Chafetz as examples. Both these white feminist theorists conceptualize from a dominant position of privilege.

Thus the most pronounced recent shift in the field, inclusive of gender, is problematic. This change has not been inclusive of the perspective of women of color or working-class women. Thus as some enclaves have opened up—such as *Gender and Society* under the editorship of Margaret Andersen, and new writings by women of color—the field is dominated by a particular race and ethnic perspective in the context of gender. In terms of core journals: *American Sociological Review (ASR), American Journal of Sociology (AJS), Social Forces* or, most tellingly, *Social Problems*, the standard conceptualizations are pervasive. With the publication of Patricia Hill Collins' *Black Feminist Thought* (1990), theorizing race, class, and gender has been placed squarely on the agenda. Whether or how much the discipline will shift in a curricular sense remains to be seen.

What's to Be Done?

Dominance by a few institutions and departments in sociology continues. These departments are likely not to have either women's studies or ethnic studies in the curriculum. The University of Chicago, as a case in point, remains wedded to the traditional conceptualization of the field. As a sociology department, it is a major site of influence and power. The chilling reality is that much of what is done in the top departments is exclusive of the new scholarship on race, ethnicity, class, and gender in interaction. Perhaps most importantly, sociology faculty are in need of transformation.

Transforming Sociology Faculty

We need to look very carefully at all of these issues with implications for sociology faculty. In fact, because the majority of the faculty of nearly all major sociology departments in research universities in the United States are male and white, we need to understand what changes faculty need to undergo as we think carefully about disciplinary transformation.

Central to the endeavor is getting faculty to rethink what they teach and how they teach. This begins with a self-placement process: how have faculty themselves been socially constructed along race, gender, and class lines? Indeed, I believe a key element is faculty transformation. Faculty have to change. They cannot do the work of teaching a diverse student body without changing. They have to ask hard questions of themselves.

Faculty are products of this society. Sociologists rarely turn their sociology upon themselves. This is a major difficulty with the field. Faculty must come to grips with the fact that they are embedded in systems of inequality and have internalized racism, classism, homophobia, sexism, the "isms" that are pervasive and systematic in this society. Indeed essential to a multicultural/gender-inclusive discipline is faculty change and commitment. We can turn outward to incorporate diverse perspectives in our curriculum, colleges and universities, but must also turn inward to involve our faculties in the transformation process.

Different Ways of Knowing and Seeing

Faculty transformation, moreover, involves an incisive approach based on knowing. Faculty have to think about and consider the "master narratives" in which they have been trained. Coming to grips with the essentialist assumption that white, Western male experience represents all that is worth knowing about the world is central to this process. As Elizabeth Minnich (1990) aptly points out, the categories that have been used to exclude people are treated as natural facts and are not problematized. Training in getting our faculty to problematize and question the natural facts of their being is essential to faculty development. Our faculty workshop is centered on getting them to think more inclusively. This viewpoint is expressed in a recent volume by Andersen and Collins. They point out:

> Those who ask us to think more inclusively want to open up the way the world is viewed, making the experience of previously excluded groups more visible and central in the construction of knowledge. Inclusive thinking shifts our perspective from the white, male-centered forms of thinking that have characterized much of Western thought. Thinking inclusively means putting the experiences of those who have been excluded at the center of thought so that we can better understand the intersections of race, class, and gender in the experiences of all groups, including those with privilege and power (1992, 2).

Furthermore, in order to pierce "natural attitudes," recentering knowledge involves understanding the impact of disciplines on our ways of knowing. For faculty it involves (un)disciplining. It involves looking critically and thoroughly at how they have come to know. Ultimately it entails a radical break and reconstitution of faculty knowl-

edge. Concretely this knowledge problematizing involves transforming the base of what is worth knowing. There is an amazing new and older scholarship by people of color which should be moved to the center of the curriculum. Faculty are key to this process. Much of this information is introduced through reading the new scholarship on women of color.

Finally, embedding faculty into the history and realities of racism, sexism, and classism is key. Because a majority of the people in sociology are Euramericans, they do not necessarily construct whiteness as a racial category. Thus, getting them to see whiteness as a racial construction is an important consideration. Whiteness carries privileges; through it internalized domination is acted out. These are uncomfortable ideas for many white faculty. Closely aligned with this reality is acquiring a natural attitude embedded in accepting conventional ways of knowing and disciplinary perspectives as the norm. We call these attitudes natural, but they need piercing.

Getting faculty to think historically and systemically is also key. The historic negative contact and power relationships between Europeans and people of color has been the source of a great deal of tension and conflict. Systems of oppression were forged. Institutional inequalities are real. Yet, at the same time, people of color have not just been victims. There is a rich cultural legacy of resistance and creativity that is not known or not well known. Our sociological work must involve examining resistance as well as oppression.

Changing Classroom Process—Pedagogy Changes

Faculty also need to think and act on their teaching. Changing content without changing process does not get us very far. Considerations about learning styles, student empowerment, and giving voice to historically silenced and marginalized groups—people of color of both genders, white women, disabled people, older students, gays, lesbians—are key issues to be addressed. The old top-down model of professor as sole authority must be looked at carefully. Faculty should consider more active learning strategies, such as making students responsible for learning, keeping journals, doing simulations, and so on. The major idea is that as we rethink our content, we have to rethink our teaching.

Conclusions

The difficult assessments that must occur in the field include reconceptualization, faculty transformation, and pedagogical change. These changes are crucial to a deep-level curriculum transformation of the discipline of sociology. The work has just begun.

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Rethinking the Disciplines: Sociology and Criminology[1]

Natalie J. Sokoloff

We have been asked to respond to questions on how things have changed in undergraduate and graduate education (from introductory textbooks in the field to research and training in graduate school) over the last twenty years as more inclusive scholarship has impacted on sociology. Twenty years ago I not only was reentering graduate school after an eight-year hiatus: I was also just beginning my teaching career at John Jay College. Then, my students were white, working-class cops—all men. Open enrollment at CUNY changed all that.

Today, my students are slightly more than half women and about two thirds or more people of color, primarily black and Latina/o. And while the racism and sexism of the larger society and, therefore, at my school, are very much with us, John Jay now requires all students to take a course on racial/ethnic diversity and a new women's center is even now in the process of opening its doors. Our new provost, dedicated to an inclusive curriculum, was the chair of the African-American Studies Department; and the new faculty hired last year (although small in number) were, in the majority, men and women of color. Not only do I teach courses directly in the area of race, gender, class, and crime; but the way in which race, gender, ethnicity, and class are structured into the very subjects that I teach are key issues discussed in my courses. Several departments at the college have recently submitted proposals for courses that deal with race, gender, class—and corrections, the law, and so forth.

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Things really have changed. This being said, it is important not to get too carried away. Because, talking with several people in the field in preparation for this panel, it seems pretty clear that the conventional approaches to criminology and criminal justice are still very much what students get in their education—whether in terms of class, race, or gender. As one scholar estimated for the combined membership of American Criminal Justice Society (ACJS) and American Society of Criminology (ASC), less than 10 percent of the members of these two key organizations are even *aware of* critical, feminist, or minority perspectives in criminal justice (Barak, 1991).[2]

My Own Education

I went to graduate school during two different periods of time, the mid-1960s and the mid- to late 1970s. My first experience was the most traditional imaginable—I was an NIMH (National Institute for Mental Health) "Fellow" (sic!) at Brown University, one of only two women in my entering class, which was all white; and while my interests always revolved around issues of social stratification and social inequality, my education fostered a mainstream understanding of the causes of and challenges to inequality.

It wasn't until I went back to graduate school, in 1973, here at CUNY's Graduate Center, that I had my first exposure to critical thinking or to feminist scholarship. Once enrolled in graduate school, I took a class from my first woman professor in higher education, Cynthia Epstein. However, over the next five years here, I had only one other woman professor (Betty Yorburg) in sociology. But despite the small number of women on the faculty at that time, a whole new world had opened up as possible areas of study. In fact, I was one of the first people in soci-

ology to take exams in the field of "gender" at the Graduate Center. It was a most exciting time to be asking questions that virtually all my male teachers had never asked before. I was also blessed with the opportunity to learn from the many women scholars in different disciplines and activist groups who were pioneers in questioning the gender bias in our understanding of the world.

Margaret Andersen's ability to connect her own personal experiences in her sociological writings[3] to the way in which the institutions of race, class, and gender shape *all* our lives helps me to put into perspective some of my own work. My original dissertation topic was a large-scale data analysis (drawn from different social classes) on how mothers affect their daughters' careers. (No surprise, it was related to my own struggles of understanding the impact of my upwardly mobile mother's experience on her two daughters.) However, the traditional kinds of questions framing the research led to an analysis that supported the then-current explanation (see Sokoloff 1980, chap. 1 for an analysis of that literature) that mothers from more privileged backgrounds acted as more "positive" role models to their daughters than mothers from much poorer origins. Feeling that I was confirming stereotypes that I did not think were true, my dissertation advisor, George Fischer, pushed me to understand what was bothering me so much. How were the traditional (and often stereotypical) ways of thinking about class and gender getting in the way of the analysis?

Over time I began to understand the problems inherent in the way I had asked questions of the data on mothers and daughters from mainstream sociological methods and perspectives. I redirected my topic so that, ultimately, my dissertation looked at the ways in which women were blamed for their poor positions in the labor market in both sociology and economics. It allowed me to take a critical

perspective to accepted theories of social inequality in both mainstream and radical sociology. This work was published as a book in 1980.[4]

Criminology and Criminal Justice

Teaching at a liberal arts college of criminal justice with only criminal justice majors made it impossible for me to *focus* on women and work in my teaching. I continue to do research and publish in the area of women and work. (In September I published my latest book on the changes experienced by black women and white women in the professional labor force since the 1960s).[5] However, as a way of combining my interest in the social construction of gender, race, and class inequality and crime, I began teaching courses on women and the criminal justice system in the early 1980s. As a result, I have become increasingly involved with the issues around theories of female offenders, women's official crime rates, the politics of incarceration, women's victimization, and the work women do in the male-dominated criminal justice system. Women of color are both more likely to be imprisoned as well as proportionately more likely to work as police and corrections officers. This makes it very clear how important it is to understand the experiences of women from various racial/ethnic and class backgrounds. As many feminists have said, making poor women of color central to our analysis helps to illuminate questions about *all* our lives from a different perspective. I am not a criminologist, nor am I a sociologist trained in the study and analysis of crime. However, I began to apply many of the theoretical ideas I had learned in studying the issues of class, race, gender, work, and inequality to gender and crime.[6] It is within this context that I make my remarks today.

What I would like to talk with you about are some of the changes in the discipline of sociology, particularly criminology and criminal justice,[7] that have occurred because of the recognition of the importance of understanding the impact of gender, race, ethnicity, and class. Unfortunately, all too often, these issues have been developed in independent and isolated ways from one another. Class, minority, and feminist analyses are not seen in the integrative way that people like Patricia Hill Collins have so often urged. In criminology, as Dorie Klein[8] has recently said "Crime is implicitly about men—unless it is feminist, in which case it is *only* about women"—and I would add, "neutral" women—women without race or gender.

Class

In the 1970s, one of the most significant changes in criminology (as in sociology) was the impact of radical or Marxist sociology on crime, a class analysis—understanding how street crime and poor people's crime is the focus of not only law enforcement and politicians but sociological criminology. In this context, radical criminology made several major contributions: (1) a capitalist society is organized on the basis of protecting private property and capital accumulation. Such a system leads us away from understanding and challenging elite (individual, corporate, and political) crime and toward controlling street crime. The outcome is that the exploitation and oppression by middle-class and particularly upper-class whites, particularly men, are (a) not defined as crimes and (b) even if they are, they are not the focus of the criminal justice system. Rather, the police, courts and corrections focus on street crime, which heavily involves poor and minority people in this society.[9]

(2) A good deal of street crime exists *because of* elite crime—or that which is not considered a crime by the elite: that is, much corporate crime, in the interest of the ruling classes and a capitalist system, is what actually leads to or causes a good deal of the street crime. For example, a factory in a city is able to close up shop and move away, devastating the city and the people of that community. (Note that the factory owners are often given large tax and other incentives/subsidies/welfare to locate in the community in the first place.) With each percentage increase in unemployment (especially in communities with higher levels of chronic unemployment), traditional crime levels rise.

Race/Ethnicity

But even as critical criminologists questioned traditional assumptions about crime and criminality, their analysis developed quite separately from the work of feminists or racial/ethnic minorities who dealt with issues of crime. According to Caldwell and Taylor Greene (1980),[10] in the black community, for example, black scholars have been writing about issues of race and crime since the beginning of the twentieth century.[11] The black perspective typically falls within the social structure and conflict theories of crime. Thus, most black authors attribute the increased involvement of blacks in criminal activity to economic, political, and social conditions of blacks in American society. Class and race oppression are directly related to crimes among poor minorities. Yet, this perspective has hardly been at the forefront of criminological theory or practice in corrections. The analyses of contemporary black criminologists (e.g., Hutchinson 1990, Lusane 1991)[12] are rarely referenced in mainstream criminology texts, thereby denying students such a perspective. And

this occurs despite the fact that more than half of those imprisoned in the United States are people of color.

Most discussions of race and crime look at demographics and numbers, rather than at a critical analysis of the issues that involve racial/ethnic minorities and whites in crime. In conventional criminology, all too often race and crime are defined as being synonymous. However, as one colleague suggested, while people all too often think about blacks or minorities when you use the phrase "race and crime," you could just as easily be talking about whites and elite and corporate crime.

Black scholars studying history and crime would study both slavery and lynching as crimes against blacks by whites. This is hardly the typical way that crime is studied in our schools. In discussions of the recent riots in Los Angeles over the acquittal of four white police officers who severely beat a black man, Rodney King, one typically hears about the criminal behavior of blacks in the community that rioted—how blacks burned and looted and destroyed their own community. Yet, according to Hubert Williams, the former head of the Police Foundation, 15 percent of those arrested were white, a majority were Latino, some were Asian, and the rest were black.

Despite the fact that approximately half of the women in prison are also black, the issue of blacks in prison has focused primarily on black men. As has been true in almost every aspect of life, when one discusses gender or race, "All the women are white, all the blacks are men" (see Gloria Hull, et al. 1982).[13] So too has this occurred in criminology and criminal justice.

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Feminist Scholarship and Criminal Justice

Just as critical and minority theorists before them, feminist scholars questioned a good deal of the taken-for-granted assumptions about crime.[14] Examples of new knowledge generated by feminist theory are:

1. Street crime is based on a system of anonymous and often random violence against people who don't know one another. But when *women* are involved, many of these crimes are by male intimates and behind closed doors. In fact, when looking at assault, women are far more likely to be assaulted "behind closed door," in the privacy of their own homes and by intimates.

2. Rape does not occur just between strangers—but between acquaintances, on a date, between intimates and partners: husbands, boyfriends, ex-partners.

3. The laws are hardly adequate to protect women. Even today, fewer than twenty states have *no* marital exemption for rape. All the others, while they may have been changed somewhat, still have some kind of exemption for married men who rape their wives.

4. One third to two fifths of all homicides of women are by male partners. The violence is in women's homes, and they are unprotected from a system that encourages, condones, and protects male violence against women—even as it says it does not.

Because of battering by husbands/ex-husbands of women, women in prison for committing homicide are there far too often for protecting themselves from a violently abusive partner. Despite this fact, too many jurisdic-

tions still do not allow *self-defense* as a plea in cases of battered women who murder their husbands.

5. For a very long time the prevailing assumption was that so few women were arrested/incarcerated because of a chivalrous criminal-justice system. Feminist scholars began to challenge every aspect of that particular myth.

As the above suggests, all too often issues of crime and women focus around crimes *by* women instead of crimes *against* women. The latter include not only crimes by individual men (as in rape or battering), but also crimes by male-dominated corporations or private profit-making interests. The latter includes, for example, occupational hazards like brown-lung disease that affects women who work in cotton mills; inhalation of chemicals, like ether, in hospital operating rooms; too many unnecessary hysterectomies leading to disease and death; use of dangerous contraceptives (Dalkon shield IUDs, certain birth control pills).

In fact, some people have argued that feminist theory and activism have been essential in expanding the boundaries of criminology and the practice of criminal justice.[15] Thus, some people argue, had not feminism turned attention to criminology/criminal justice, the discipline would be playing catch up with the practical insights of its citizens:

- women citizens complained about (and sued police departments for) police indifference and ineffectiveness in helping battered women;
- women police officers refused to continue to be sexually harassed and intimidated by male colleagues and supervisors;

- women in prison complained about unequal access to programs that could help them when they left prison; and

- black women prisoners have fought back against white male prison guards raping them.

Had it not been for these real people, both the field of criminology and the practice of the criminal justice system would be in the dark. Feminist scholarship and feminist activists have had a tremendous impact on criminology.

However, it is equally the case that while more research and writing is done from a feminist perspective in criminology, this work is not being taken into the mainstream classroom curriculum in criminology/criminal justice. A recent issue of the *Journal of Criminal Justice Education* (Fall 1992) talks precisely about such an impact. As two of the most well-known feminist scholars in the field concluded "with the exception of feminist treatments of rape and intimate violence, the field remains essentially untouched" (Daly and Chesney-Lind 1989: 497).[16] While different articles look at the quantity and quality (content) of materials in criminology/criminal justice texts on women (and sometimes on minorities), as the number of references to women may have shown some increase (sometimes very small, other times a bit more substantial), the scholarship and interpretations are most compatible with predominant mainstream theoretical frameworks in criminology and criminal justice—*not* with frameworks which challenge students to question conventional assumptions.[17]

Thus, while there may be somewhat more reference to women it often tends to be in stereotypical ways.[18] As one researcher concludes, "Rape myths, implicit condemnations of the sexual liberation of women, and charges of

female deceitfulness (in explaining crime) still are all too common in the newer (criminology) texts" (Wright 1992: 230).[19] Women victims (and offenders) are no longer described as "vamps and tramps;" they are now seen as "teases and flirts." But women are still said to be at fault for or cause their own victimization.

A critical analysis of how race, gender, and class systems are organized and interrelated to effect women's criminality is not the focus of work on women and minorities included in criminology/criminal justice texts (see here again Eigenberg and Barro 1993). Nor is the feminist scholarship that argues that women's criminality is strongly linked to their victimization—as women, most particularly as poor minority women in a racist and classist society that is biased against women: for example, see Meda Chesney-Lind, Regina Arnold, Eleanor Miller, and Noellie Rodriguez.[20] These feminist scholars have shown that girls who have been victimized both physically and sexually by fathers and stepfathers run away from home, in that process become defined as status offenders, commit petty crimes in order to survive, including prostitution. They are picked up by the police and labeled as criminals for the most immediate behavior, which is either petty criminal behavior or simply violating (white middle-class) gender appropriate norms. The real criminals, however, the men who have abused them, and the patriarchal system that undergirds this abuse, are lost from the picture as these women are hustled off to prison to "pay for" their crimes. Moreover, and most importantly, little is done to change the adequate educational, occupational, and economic systems that are structured for class, race, and gender inequality throughout American society. Prisons become the warehouses of the disenfranchised—who are disproportionately poor and people of color. (Any society that has more young black men in prison or controlled by the criminal

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justice system—over 600,000—than in college—only about 400,000—has got to examine its racist underpinnings.)

To be sure, both research and specific courses on gender and crime have expanded. Both the ASC and ACJS have sections on Gender and Minorities; since 1989 there has been a journal devoted specifically to issues of women and crime *Women & Criminal Justice*. Feminist scholars have been prolific in researching and writing about the social construction of women's criminality (e.g., see two recent issues of the journal of *Social Justice*, 1990, 1991); and incredible scholars are available to students at different universities. Graduate education has certainly been enriched—and as more women—and those from outside the traditional criminal justice mainstream—enter graduate programs in criminology, more such courses have become available. But, since there is not a commitment to feminist scholarship per se in criminology, a student has to be lucky to get such a teacher.

At CUNY, John Jay College provides training in criminal justice at the masters and doctoral levels. In both the master's and Ph.D. programs there are very few courses that specifically focus on gender issues. Students typically do not have available courses in gender studies. (No such courses are *required* at the undergraduate or graduate level.) Nor do most of the other courses offer gender analysis as an *integral* part of the course. Often, I am told, there simply isn't enough time for such topics. Too much else has to be introduced to the students. (I use my own school as an example, but other feminists in academic criminology programs make very similar observations.)

At John Jay College, the M.A. program offers only two courses on women's issues per year out of a total of

forty courses offered.[21] In the Ph.D. program, students do not have a guarantee of even one such course a year. And an analysis of questions about the racist and class biases of the criminal justice system is not a regular or required part of the graduate curriculum either.

Things may be beginning to change as more and more women and minorities are entering the program. Women in particular have increased in large numbers. At John Jay College women make up 53 percent of undergraduates, 45 percent of all master's students (with only 5 percent of the criminal justice master's program), and about one third of the doctoral program. A women's center has opened this semester; and a part-time director has been hired. The women's studies committee of concerned faculty has been able to get one course release time (over the year) for a coordinator.

Feminist scholarship has been more developed in the area of women's victimization. This is driven, I believe, by the pervasiveness of this problem throughout the society, its impact on women from all levels of society, and women's activism. Feminist theory has contributed some, but not as greatly as it might, to an understanding of female offenders. All too often this is a race/class issue—as it is for men, and very hard to challenge within the confines of the existing structures of American society.

Issues of race and crime are still treated in a highly conventional manner in the field. That is, most black scholars in the field feel that issues around race are connected very directly to the issues of class and oppression and the marginalization of blacks in American society. In this process, liberals and more progressive social scientists have not dealt with the issue of race and crime—perhaps because of a Catch 22 they find themselves in.

Negative stereotypes are all too readily latched upon; and yet to make real change we must deal with the broader structural problems of society that the criminal justice system can't deal with alone. In fact, this may be one of the larger challenges we face in society—to work not only to make changes that are feminist, antiracist, respectful of its many cultures, and not class privileged—while also working to change the larger society at its very underpinnings in these very same directions.

Ultimately, issues of race, gender, and class—and their domination—are largely ignored (other than in stereotypical or backlash kinds of ways). It is necessary to reformulate our understanding and our activism in relation to crime by really grasping how much crime is steeped in systems of race, class, and gender domination, and how this is part and parcel of a larger society that is similarly organized.

Notes

1. I would like to thank my colleagues at John Jay College for their comments and insights on this topic, in particular Barbara Raffel Price and Basil Wilson.

2. G. Barak, "Cultural Literacy and Multicultural Inquiry into the Study of Crime and Justice." *Journal of Criminal Justice Education* 2:2 (1991):173–92.

3. For example, see Andersen's editorial, Gender & Society (December 1992): 541–45; and Andersen's "The Socialization of a Teacher," in Beth Hess, Elizabeth Marksan, and Peter Stein, *Sociology*. 3d ed. (New York: Macmillan), 380–81.

4. Natalie J. Sokoloff. *Between Money and Love: The Dialectics of Women's Home and Market Work*. (New York: Praeger,1980.)

5. Natalie J. Sokoloff. *Black Women & White Women in the Professions: Occupational Segregation by Race and Gender, 1960-1980* (New York and London: Routledge, Chapman, Hall,1992.)

6. This approach was followed in a book I coedited with Barbara Raffel Price, *The Criminal Justice System and Women Offenders, Victims, and Workers* (New York: Clark Boardman, 1980). A second edition of the book is being published by McGraw Hill in 1994. This time the book is organized around the interactive effects of race as well as class and gender. While this was true of the first edition, the second one has been able to include much more material on race than last time.

7. Criminology refers to the study of crime causation and theory building based on traditional sociological models of crime; criminal justice refers to the study of the organized response in our society to problems associated with crime: the structuring of policing, courts, corrections, victim services, and the like. In this context, criminology may be described as a politically liberal discipline especially at the leadership level, which expanded greatly as a subspecialty of sociology into special degree programs under LEAA in the 1950s and 1970s. According to Wilson and Moyer (1992), students today tend to align themselves with the most conservative elements of criminal-justice policy; and while a liberal arts education in criminal justice is supposed to expand the students' minds and hearts, the ostensibly neutral stance of social science tends to ratify the status quo and not challenge underlying questions about the system as it exists in the here and now. See Nanci Koser Wilson and Imogene Moyer, "Affirmative Action

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Multiculturalism and Politically Correct Criminology," *Journal of Criminal Justice Education* 3 (Fall 1992): 277–92.

8. See Dorie Klein's "Afterword Twenty Years Ago . . . Today" to her classic article on "The Etiology of Female Crime: A Review of the Literature" in Price and Sokoloff, *The Criminal Justice System and Women*. 2d ed. (McGraw Hill, 1994).

9. If white collar and elite crimes were "acted upon" we would see prisons overrun with white men. Consider only some of the crimes for which elite individuals and corporate executives are rarely incarcerated: fraud, falsification of records, tax evasion, malpractice, illegal political contributions, criminal antitrust, 70,000 to 80,000 deaths per year due to faulty products or exposure to dangerous chemicals.

10. Loretta Caldwell and Helen E. Taylor Greene, "Implementing a Black Perspective in Criminal Justice," in A. Cohn, B. Ward, *et al.*, eds. *Improving Management in Criminal Justice* (1980), 143–56. For a more recent analysis, see Vernetta Young and Anne Thomas Sulton, "Excluded: The Current Status of African-American Scholars in the Field of Criminology and Criminal Justice," *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency* 28 (February 1991): 101–16.

11. Blacks are the largest single racial/ethnic minority in prison in the United States. They dwarf all other minority groups, even though an increasing number of Latinas/os are also incarcerated. Since blacks have a unique relationship to the criminal justice system both because of their large numbers in prison and because of the history of slavery in the United States, most of the literature on minorities and the criminal justice system has been by and about blacks.

12. Earl Ofari Hutchinson, *The Mugging of Black America*. (Chicago: African American Images, 1990); Clarence Lusane, *Pipe Dream Blues: Racism & the War on Drugs* (Boston: South End Press, 1991).

13. Gloria T. Hull, Patricia Bell Scott, and Barbara Smith, eds. *All the Women are White, All the Blacks are Men, But Some of Us Are Brave: Black Women's Studies* (New York: Feminist Press, 1982).

14. It should be noted that both class and race analyses typically leave women out—so that discussions of class and crime and race and crime fail to understand and analyze the experiences of women of color. What this means is that feminist scholarship also tended to focus on white women and black scholarship tended to focus on black men. (As noted above, so far there has been little on groups other than blacks in the criminal justice system. That—as well as the fact that blacks are the largest group pulled in by the criminal justice system—is why most of the research on racial/ethnic minorities focuses on blacks).

15. In fact it should be clear that there has been a good deal of overlap and interrelationship between feminist scholarship and activism by women in all aspects of their lives.

16. Kathleen Daly and Meda Chesney Lind, "Feminism and Criminology," *Justice Quarterly* 5:4 (1989): 497–538.

17. For a discussion of these and other related issues see Helen Eigenberg and Agnes Barro, "Images of Women of Color in Introductory Criminology and Criminal Justice Textbooks." (Norfolk, Va.: Unpublished manuscript, 1993).

18. For a comparison of a feminist analysis of female offenders and a more conventional "male stream" analysis, see Nichole Hahn Rafter's (*Gender & Society*, 1991) review of two new books, one by Allison Morris, *Women, Crime and Criminal Justice*, and the other by Ron Barri Flowers, *Women and Criminality*.

19. Richard A. Wright, "From Vamps and Tramps to Teases and Flirts: Stereotypes of Women in Criminology Textbooks, 1956 to 1965 and 1981 to 1990." *Journal of Criminal Justice Education* 3 (Fall 1992): 223–35.

20. Meda Chesney-Lind, "Girls, Delinquency and Juvenile Justice: Toward a Feminist Theory of Young Women's Crime," in *The Criminal Justice System and Women*, edited by Barbara Raffel Price and Natalie J. Sokoloff, 2d ed. (New York: McGraw Hill, 1994); Regina A. Arnold "Processes of Victimization and Criminalization of Black Women," in Price and Sokoloff, eds., *The Criminal Justice System*; Eleanor Miller, *Street Women* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986); Meda Chesney-Lind and Noellie Rodriguiz "Women Under Lock and Key," in *Prison Journal* 63 (1983): 47–65.

21. While there are about 100 courses in all of the graduate programs at John Jay College—including forensic psychology, public administration, fire science, etc.—there are still only two courses in women's studies for these 100 courses.

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Rethinking the Disciplines: Sociology

Julia Wrigley

At first glance, sociology simply isn't the same field it was twenty years ago. The very term "gender" was barely known in the discipline at that time. Louise Tilly declares that Ann Oakley in 1972 was perhaps the first to distinguish between the concepts of "sex" and "gender" (1992, 592). Drawing this distinction enabled feminists to stress the social and variable nature of gender relations. It spurred research on gender in social arenas from organizations to political movements to families. By 1992, Joan Acker could write that "Gender has become, in the last twenty years, part of the everyday language of social science, largely as a consequence of the feminist movement and the accompanying intellectual efforts to better understand the systematic and widespread subordination of women and their domination by men" (1992).

While it is only a few decades ago that feminists began changing sociology, there have already been several cycles of feminist thought. As feminists have secured positions in academia, some of the confrontational political edge has been lost from feminist writing, but in some ways feminist thinking now poses a broader challenge to mainstream sociology than it did in the early stages of the women's movement. Early ideas of "sex roles" were abandoned as feminists realized how narrow they were. Now feminists emphasize not simply exploring attitude differences or different patterns of socialization of males and females, but the much more fundamental task of rethinking whole systems of inequality. Feminists are interested in how eco-

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nomic and power relations in society are shaped by gender and how they, in turn, shape gender. With this broad perspective has come a much greater openness to many different kinds of "difference" and inequality, including those stemming from race and from sexual identity.

Given the vitality of feminist theorizing, and of research into many different aspects of racial and gender inequality, sociology might have been expected to have changed more than most disciplines in response to feminist challenge. Sociology, after all, deals centrally with the institutions and ideologies of modern society. Taking as its main subject matter the development of modern industrial society, and the exploration of its institutions, sociologists have dealt with their own societies in their own time periods. Sociology covers the family, education, and, perhaps most importantly, the occupational hierarchy and the systems of power that govern social relations. What could be more natural than incorporating gender, clearly a central axis of inequality? And, in retrospect, what could have been more unnatural than omitting it for the first hundred-odd years of the field's existence?

Sociology, a young discipline, has had more social critics within its ranks than such older disciplines as political science, and even its orthodoxy is often at least slightly to the left of political science orthodoxy, geared as that is to established powers. Thus, what is perhaps surprising is how slow the pace of change has been. This is probably due in part to the nature of the ideological perspectives in the field. Much of sociology is atheoretical, but to the extent the field has had intellectual coherence, it stems from shared awareness of several major perspectives, each associated with a classic thinker, tracing their lineages back, respectively, to Marx, Weber, and Durkheim. The work of these classic sociologists still in some sense defines the

major divisions in the field. Sociology as a discipline has been structured by great schools of thought, with basic worldviews provided by the masters, but updated by perhaps lesser but more modern thinkers of our own era. The de facto consensus on who matters in sociology has helped to exclude the study of gender, as gender did not cross the intellectual horizons of the founders of these major schools of thought.

Of course, much work has gone on at an atheoretical level. American sociology, relatively well funded as it has been, has produced a wealth of empirical research. Concentrating on the development and advance of technical skills, and immersed as they have been in practical problems of data collection and measurement, many American sociologists have refrained from entering theoretical debates outside the immediate scope of their research problems. They have, however, relied on models that have rested on rigid but unexamined assumptions about how gender and other forms of inequality operate in American society.

Given the structure of American sociology, with relatively closed intellectual approaches organizing theoretical work within the field, and with much empirical work grounded on unexamined assumptions, sociology's resistance to feminist challenge becomes more understandable. To incorporate gender into research on more than a trivial level requires major adjustment of theoretical approaches and a corresponding penetration of the enormous body of semi-applied or empirical work that represents most sociologists' daily labor.

Many people, of course, have a stake in defending the field's traditional approaches. It has also proven hard to build new theories with the scope and authority of the old ones. Feminists differ among themselves about how to

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accomplish this. While there has been much feminist ferment in sociology, we have yet to see a restructuring of the field, despite the enormous challenge of trying to incorporate gender into established ways of thinking about society. The very scope of the changes required to genuinely, seriously, take gender into account is so daunting that it has simply not happened, except on a piecemeal basis.

This is still more the case with research trying to simultaneously deal with class, race, and gender. Many sociologists are now uneasily aware that work that does not incorporate "class, race, and gender" is outmoded from the moment it is done, yet most also do not know exactly how to accomplish what they call for rhetorically. They find it both theoretically and practically daunting to carry out research that gives some kind of equal weight to these three axes of inequality. It is easier to give primacy to a particular factor than to explain not only how each comes into play but how one system of inequality conditions the others and is, in turn, itself conditioned by other systems.

Contemporary stratification research exhibits the difficulty of forcing the rethinking of established lines of work. Sociologists have sought to explain why most societies of any complexity have been stratified. They have tried to explain the sources of social inequality and, equally importantly, to explore the implications of such inequality for social and political action. Sociologists have studied inequality because they think it matters. Of course, the reason they think it matters varies with their particular perspective. Marxists think it matters because social change springs from class inequalities and conflicts. Functionalists think it matters because they believe that in a modern society, inheritance of position is replaced by mobility based on merit. They describe "modern" society as differing markedly from older societies in this respect and much status

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attainment research attempts to document a pattern of meritocratic advance. Stratification researchers have by and large treated gender as a matter of secondary concern. They do note that women have been treated differently from men, and have occupied different places in the world, but they have not attached great social weight to those differences. They have traditionally seen them as operating outside the central dynamics of the society.

Feminists have challenged traditional modes of thinking by insisting gender is not "natural," not outside the main sources of inequality, but is itself an inequality so central that it long predates all other known sources of inequality. They have pointed out that gender inequality, pervasive and long-standing as it has been, has escaped analysis by traditional theorists because it has been so taken for granted that sociologists could ignore its very existence. Just as many sociologists, at least those writing before the civil rights movement, ignored racial inequality in describing American society, so did stratification researchers, overwhelmingly white and male, ignore gender. In their world, men might oppress and exploit men, or, conversely, for those more positive about the social order, men might rise to the level of their merit, regardless of their social origins, but gender and race have not been perceived as central to either process.

The continuing isolation of gender concerns from analyses of other forms of inequality can be seen in the September 1992 issue of the most widely read journal in sociology, the book review journal of the American Sociological Association, *Contemporary Sociology*. The issue contains two major symposia. The first covers gendered institutions. The second deals with the history of status attainment research in the twenty-five years since Blau and Duncan published their notable book, *The American Oc-*

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cupational Structure. What is striking is how little intersection there is between the two symposia. Out of fifteen contributions on the state of social stratification research, only one, by Paula England, deals with gender. In a broad assessment of the state of stratification research, gender becomes a marginal concern. Gender has its place in the field, as illustrated by the symposium on gendered institutions, but that place is still off to one side, separated from some of the core analyses of inequality and hierarchy.

The separation of gender research from political sociology and from the general study of inequality can also be seen in analyses of subfields within sociology. The discipline is increasingly balkanized into subfields. This has implications for how people approach research questions. Most sociologists identify with particular subfields and are identified by others as being in them. Jobs are often allocated on the basis of subfield. Increasingly, sociology meetings are run by sections built around subfields, and journals cater to these subfields. The American Sociological Association now publishes eight journals. The subfields themselves have markedly different status (Ennis 1992). Those dealing with "low status" subjects, like women or education, rank low, while those dealing with more "male identified," seemingly powerful subjects rank higher. Network analyses show that those studying gender have close ties to those studying the family, but they are not closely tied to those in other subfields (Cappell and Guterbock 1992). Gender and the study of the family remain segregated within sociology as a whole.

Feminists, in putting forward an organizing concept of enormous breadth—gender—potentially challenge both the core theoretical perspectives of the field and, incidentally, also its subfield organization. In trying, for example, to link the family and the structured inequalities found in the workplace, feminists could potentially link the hitherto

disconnected worlds of "stratification" researchers and "family" sociologists. Feminists have tried to link inequality within the family to inequality in the public sphere of the society. This has been a stunningly radical notion, with far-reaching implications. Feminists have not accepted the idea that the family is a "natural" unit, insisting on its social aspect and on the inequalities within it. Family sociologists have been marginalized within the field, yet feminists put forth a view of social inequality that sees stratification research as having stumbled because it has failed to consider inequalities within the family. To take feminist research seriously is not only to reassess basic theoretical assumptions, but also to upset the status order within the field, the assumed basis for distributing rewards and prestige. Feminists face many difficulties in trying to reorient intellectual perspectives. The complex work of developing a theory of how different sources of inequality support and yet differ from one another is only in its infancy. Class theory, with a much longer intellectual pedigree, has also had the advantage of pointing to both a political agenda and a research agenda: a study of the conditions under which social class divisions give rise to conflict and political struggle. Class theory's connection with the world of inequality and political power is immediately apparent. Gender theory remains more diffuse, occupying both micro and macro terrain. In emphasizing the interplay of class, race, and gender, sometimes the very notion of a theory has gotten lost in a sense that "everything is important and everything is equally important." A theoretical perspective becomes more a balancing act than an analytic focus.

Sociologists will never be able to put the genie of gender back in the bottle, and the field will continue to change and absorb gender studies, but the challenge for feminists is to make the changes go beyond the superficial. This requires intellectual breadth and theoretical ambition,

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as well as the type of feminist convictions that have shaken mainstream thinking in each of the social science disciplines and the humanities. The enthusiasm for gender research among graduate students makes it clear there will be new troops for the task.

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Rethinking the Disciplines: Sociology of the Family

Gloria Bonilla-Santiago

In what ways has the discipline been affected by the scholarship of the last twenty years that has focused on gender, race, ethnicity, and class?

Feminist, race, and ethnic studies have advanced our understanding of the family's relationships to the economy and the state over different historical periods. It is my belief that the discipline has become richer and meaningful. Let's examine it within a framework that includes five perspectives in the area of social work.

The *first* perspective is to recognize the progress made in the last twenty years in implementing accreditation standards that call for special efforts to enrich programs by providing racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity in the composition of the student body, faculty and curriculum design. The Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) since 1971 has been very successful at implementing such standards. The *second* perspective is the systematic development and use of a body of knowledge involving gender, ethnicity, and class theories on new groups of people in the curriculum. The *third* perspective is the demonstrated knowledge and competence of faculties in schools of social work in relation to the ethnic minority experience—of blacks, Chicanos, Asian Americans, Native Americans, Puerto Ricans—and the struggles of these groups for self-determination and empowerment in a frequently hostile environment. In addition, we have seen the development of new knowledge and theories and sociological explanations

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for new family definitions, new images and ideals about family, and myths. The *fourth* perspective is the development of social services controlled by ethnic minority communities that have provided viable field placements for many students. The *fifth* perspective is the sociopolitical stance of the social work profession as manifested in an increasingly conservative society.

We have made positive contributions to the sociology discipline by reexamining the families of the past and the emergence of the modern family, the industrialization process and families in relation to class, gender, and race. Issues of immigration and race relations have been in the forefront of academic study. For the first time we can review and make available class, new cultural approaches to the social structures of inequality and its relationships to families. In the area of gender we now have structural explanations about sex/gender systems; and in terms of race, we have new structural and cultural explanations and frameworks with which to understand issues of race. We also can study the changing connections between the roles of women, men, and children, sexual behavior, and differentiated forms of intimacy, recent trends in contemporary marriages and divorce, and contemporary lifestyle variations.

Have their been any shifts in the ways research is taught to graduate students in the field? If so, what are they?

Knowledge about racial stratification has not been incorporated into much feminist research on the family, and race enters the discussion of family life only when minority families are concerned. Feminist rethinking of the family has dropped the culture-deviance perspective, but for the most part, research retains a cultural perspective.

Are the questions that the discipline raises—and especially those areas with which you are most familiar—the same as they were two decades ago? If not, what have been the changes? Have any of the changes begun to show up in introductory textbooks in the discipline? What are some examples?

There have been feminist and race revisions in scholarship as it relates to the disciplines. The feminist challenge to traditional family theory has been accomplished by deconstructing the family and breaking it into constituent elements so that the underlying structures are exposed. In doing so, feminists have brought into relief three aspects of that structure: ideologies that serve to mystify women's experiences as wives and mothers; hierarchical divisions that generate conflict and struggle within families; and the multiple and dynamic interconnections between households and the larger political economy.

Feminists have opened up a whole new vista by asking not what do women do for the family (an older question), but what does the family do for women? What does it do to women? Whom does the family organization serve the best and how? (Bridenthal, 231–32)

Feminists have challenged the monolithic notion of the family as a nuclear unit with a breadwinner husband and a full-time homemaker wife as the only legitimate norm. We now acknowledge alternative family structures and living arrangements such as nonmarital cohabitation, single-parent households, extended kinship units, and expanded households, dual-worker families, commuter marriages, gay and lesbian households, and collectives.

The sociology of the family has been noted for its absence of a strong tradition of theory and for being heavily normative, moralistic, and mingled with social policy

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and the social objectives of various action groups. Nowhere is this tendency more apparent than in sociology's treatment of racial/ethnic families in the United States. Mainstream sociology has supported popular ideology by legitimizing the marginalization of racial/ethnic groups in the social hierarchy. As cultural holdovers in a modernizing world, minority families have been relegated outside the core of family theory. Scholars of other disciplines have refuted this model of cultural deviance, arguing that alternative family patterns are related to, but not responsible for, the social location of minorities. Revisionist approaches have emphasized the structural conditions giving rise to varied family forms, rather than the other way around. Differences in family patterns have been reinterpreted as adaptations to the conditions of racial inequality and poverty, often as sources of survival and strength (see Billingsley 1968; Glenn 1983; Gutman 1976; Hill 1972; Ladner 1971; Stack 1974; Wagner and Shaffer 1980; and Zinn 1990).

Systematically incorporating critiques of hierarchies of race and class into feminist reconstructions of the family remains a challenge, a necessary step in the development of theories of family that are inclusive.

Do you think there are efforts to reconceptualize the discipline—or parts of the discipline—that have had a major impact on it as a whole? If so what, what are they? If changes in your view are minor, please reflect on their nature and why they may have remained marginal to the practice of the discipline in general.

There have been serious attempts to reconceptualize the discipline through curriculum revisions and through the acknowledgment of new scholarship on the area of gender, race, class, and ethnicity. I will comment on some strategies that have been useful, but much still needs to be done

to institutionalize these new contributions. There are strategies to reconceptualize the discipline as a whole and to diversify the curriculum in general, and strategies specifically for the profession of social work. Traditionally the transformation of the curriculum has involved three overlapping steps:

1. The first step involves gaining information about the diversity of the ethnic or gender experience and the members of these groups.

2. The second step is deciding how to teach this new material. This process involves changing the way one teaches the discipline.

3. The third step includes addressing classroom dynamics to ensure a safe atmosphere to support learning for all students.

Beginning with a critique of the placement of gender or ethnicity in the traditional curriculum, we deal with marginality. Rather than starting only with women missing from the curriculum, I have always felt the need to look for people of color and their contributions as well. In order to reshape the curriculum, therefore, we must bring women and all people of color into our teaching.

We Need to Plan for Diversity

For example, too often faculty teach the female experience in this nation and have but one mandatory lecture on women of color. Students are asked to read a chapter or two from a reader or a major work on black women. Common selections include Angela Davis's *Women, Race, and Class* (1981) and Paula Giddings's *When and Where I Enter* (1984). The impact of black women on race and sex

in America are given token treatment with Alice Walker's *(1982) The Color Purple*.

The Lack of Materials

Integrating diversity into the curriculum is difficult because: (1) Most faculty are just learning about women and people of color through recent exposure to ethnic studies or feminist scholarship. (2) Only a few college faculty are knowledgeable about and at ease with material on women of color. No one mentioned women of color when most contemporary college faculty pursued their degrees, therefore lack of information is a major contributor to the limited and inadequate treatment this subject receives in courses and in research projects.

To remedy this problem, faculty can gain familiarity with the historical and contemporary experiences of women and people of color, yet many white male academics continue to put together volumes on specific, substantive issues that do not include such material. Taught the dominant group's experiences as the norm, students do not learn to appreciate the structural sources of the status of racial/ethnic women. Such curriculum works to justify and perpetuate a continuation of separate treatments and hold back the integration of the fields of gender, race, and ethnic studies into the traditional disciplines.

The first step is to acknowledge one's lack of exposure to these histories. There are a number of structural difficulties that make learning new information about women and people of color problematic for most faculty. It is difficult for faculty to compensate for the gaps in their knowledge when they are faced with heavy teaching responsibilities and the pressure to publish. College administrators can support their efforts with released time, finan-

cial support for workshops and institutes, and aid in writing grants for institutes, conferences, and seminars that deal with these issues.

Second, the task of filling in the gaps in faculty knowledge about women in general and women of color in particular is not easy because women's studies is an interdisciplinary field. Most faculty are trained for research in a specific discipline. There are a couple of places with resources and tools to help faculty with this. For example, the Center for Research on Women at Memphis State* has been a pioneer in this area. Also, other centers and projects have produced bibliographies, collections of syllabi, essays, and other resources to assist faculty with curriculum integration directed at including race, class, and gender.

Third, institutionalized racism and sexism are structured into both the commercial and academic publishing markets. It is sometimes difficult for scholars of women and people of color to get their work into print. There are structural barriers to gain access for research on certain populations, including problems in locating resources.

With new information, faculty can challenge myths and begin to interrupt racism and sexism in the classroom. I think having information is key to helping faculty combat the feelings of powerlessness many experience in the face of racist and sexist attitudes on the part of students.

What to Do Once I Have This New Information

1. This perspective is the core of a new textbook in sociology of the family, *Diversity in Families*, by Maxine Baca Zinn and Stanley Eitzer (1990). This text demon-

* Now University of Memphis

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strates how race and class, the major structures of inequality, specifically effect family forms. Students like the book because it does not hold up any one family form as the norm by which other families are judged.

2. Such information makes available material on women of color and working-class women that integrate their experiences throughout the course. In this way, information on the diversity of experiences becomes part of the knowledge that students are responsible for learning and about which they will be evaluated. Anything less is self-defeating.

3. When we treat the experiences of people of color at the core of the course, not as interesting asides, we maximize our opportunities to talk about social structure. When material on all women is spread throughout the course, the instructor is in a unique position to combat the racism of students and to challenge more mainstream and dominant culture visions of people of color and their situations.

Once we abandon the one obligatory lecture and make a serious effort to address race and/or class during the entire course, we have made a commitment to talking about social structure. This framework gives us an alternative to discussing the myth of equal opportunity in the United States and to assuming that each individual makes him/herself. With this information about people of color and working-class people, we can help students explore their histories and the current dynamics of structural inequality. Such discussions help shift us away from explanations based on concepts rooted in the motivation of individuals.

The Implications for Classroom Dynamics

1. Integrating women and people of color into the curriculum can change the way one teaches, not just the content of courses. When one brings vulnerable populations into the core of the curriculum, students will react. It is incumbent upon you to teach students an appreciation for the experiences of women and people of color that goes beyond cultural enrichment.

2. Every institution is different, and the institutional setting is key. If the institution accepts the challenge of mainstreaming women and people of color, there may be structural supports that would be lacking in an institution that has reconfirmed its commitment to the traditional curriculum.

For example, I have used various approaches in the school of social work to break students from their biases and lack of information.

> I take them for a tour in a neighborhood that is culturally mixed to meet clients at shelters, to visit the community centers and libraries. I expose them to urban experiences and challenge their stereotypes and misinformation about stable working-class housing.
>
> If this is not possible for you, use films, speakers, and reading materials that capture the lives of human beings living in black communities.
>
> Have them break into small-group discussions with case studies and have them create role-plays that expose them to different experiences.

Have them visit a group of welfare mothers at a training institute and have them to speak to your students and share their values with them.

I have made very successful visits to state prisons providing students with opportunities to interact with inmates about their concerns about improving prison conditions. We have had excellent debates in such circumstances.

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Note: These biographical notes were current as of 1993 when these essays were first published.

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Reader Comment

Rethinking the Disciplines: Sociology

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➢ ***CUNY Panels: Rethinking the Disciplines***

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